



Gateway Gazette

Monthly Newsletter of the St. Louis Chapter

BUICK CLUB OF AMERICA

Volume XXVI, No. 4

May 2006

HCCM EASTER SHOW IN FOREST PARK

Despite threatening weather reports, Easter morning proved nice enough for a big turnout of Buicks. Our chapter lined up 22 Buicks chronologically from 1932 to 1981. Wonder if people even noticed the order? And that 25 year old car, the '81 Buick, looked a lot like an '88 Reatta to me. Of course there was a big gap without Hank, but he was remembered with a poster Adam Martin made. And Dave Smith made a sturdy easel for supporting it on the windy parking lot. Teamwork. Thanks, guys.

What a bad week we had. With Hank Deglman's death Monday, a lot of us were in a daze early in the week. Many of our members were at the funeral home for visitation on Tuesday and we had at least

17 old Buicks following the hearse from the funeral home to the church and from the church to the cemetery on Wednesday. It would have been a very pretty sight except for the occasion.

Whether Easter brings to mind resurrection and new life or springtime and putting away dark clothes, the symbolism seemed even more significant this year after a very dark week. At this Easter Show, it was important for our chapter to make a good showing for going forward. And we were looking shiny bright.

A special thanks to Pete Nathan for staying in close touch with the Deglman family and actively keeping us informed this past month.



UPCOMING EVENTS:

May 4th
May 6th

7:30 PM
10:00 AM

Monthly Meeting at Chuck-A-Burger
Sinclair Buick Show

GATEWAY CHAPTER MEETING MINUTES — March 2, 2006

Location: The April 2006 meeting was held on Thursday, April 6, at O'Leary's. A total of 36 members attended.

The Club meeting was facilitated by Carl Schmiehausen, Assistant Director.

Birthdays and anniversaries for April were announced.

Pete Nathan gave the Treasurer's Report. After income and expenditures, a total of \$1,478.64 was in the Club's account as of April 6, 2006.

Herb and Sharon Morris won the drawing for the member profile to be featured in the *Gateway Gazette*.

The next regular Buick Club meeting will be held May 4 at Chuck-A-Burger on St. Charles Rock Road.

New Business:

Please update your member information for the Club roster including car(s) owned, mailing address, email address, phone number(s) and any other pertinent data. Contact John Waltz at BCA55waltz@charter.net or (314) 961-2510. Also, this information can be written and given to any of the Club officers at a regular meeting.

A Board of Directors meeting will be held on April 13. Any decisions resulting from that meeting will be discussed at the May 4 meeting.

The winner of the 50/50 drawing was Paul Horkits.

Herb Morris, Secretary

MY 1957 ROADMASTER CONVERTIBLE

Contributed by Paul Meyer



Back in 1994 I owned a 1968 Corvette coupe, a numbers matching, mostly original, big block 427, 435 HP, 3X2 carbureted monster. This car did not want to just run, it wanted to fly. It was a car that really was not a joy to drive. At anything over about 80 degrees, your feet would literally melt, they were so close to the motor. And it was one of those notoriously troublesome cars, something was always wrong. I turned down a hefty profit for it, wanting more just to be greedy. So, one day as I was unloading it from my trailer after a friend took it to Bloomington to try to sell it, it rolled off the trailer and jumped the curb which luckily made it stop. That was the last straw. I advertised it in the *Post Dispatch* and ended up selling it back to the same fellow that I had originally bought it from for the same price I had paid for it. At least I didn't lose any money.

With a hefty stack of cash burning a hole in my pocket, Mary Ann and I headed for Hershey, Pennsylvania. On the way there, I told her that I was going to buy a Buick convertible. "What kind?" she says. "What ever kind they have in the car corral," was my answer. I had no idea what might be there, but I was ready. The cash was really burning now; gotta get rid of it before she decides she needs some jewelry or food or a new mattress or something unnecessary like that. When we arrive, I make a quick run through the car corral while she

checks out the whole state of Pennsylvania for garage sales and antique shops. Only two Buick convertibles in the lot: a 1949 Super, yellow, restored and the totally original, red and white 1957 Roadmaster. Which one do I want? I mull it over. The '49 is nice, needs nothing, but the '57 could be a real highway car: lots of power, room, class and will probably need some work, but how much work is yet to be known. I'll just ask the owner. Owner? No one around and the car is partially covered with a Corvette car cover. Must be some sort of omen here, the Corvette car cover. It was pulled tight from the headlights to about the center of the trunk lid. Now you know how long this boat is.

I think I first saw the car on Wednesday afternoon, but no owner. I watched it all day Thursday, all day Friday and till about 10:00 AM on Saturday. You talk about a long wait; it seemed like forever. As you all know, one never looks under a car cover. It's hands off, private property, wait till the owner gets there. When I approached the car on Saturday morning, I find a gentleman standing behind it not looking like he was the owner. I asked if he knew who the owner was. He replied that he was. I asked to see the car and when he uncovered it the crowd formed immediately. It was almost like Santa was giving away candy to the children at Christmas. I knew that if I lost the attention of the owner it was going to be "almost bought a car." So

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MY 1957 ROADMASTER CONVERTIBLE

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I did everything I could to keep his undivided attention. I asked his price. He said it was on the windshield, but make an offer. I made my offer. "No way," was his answer and then the big question. What would he take? He told me that he had turned down the same offer two times earlier in the week. So I upped my offer a mere \$250. "You just bought yourself a car," was his reply.

A word of advice: if you ever want to buy a car, never take a trailer. It's bad luck. Take a trailer along and you come home empty. Don't take one and you will definitely need it. I had to have a trailer to haul the car home and I found one at Tommy's Trailers space. It belonged to a man from Canada who no longer needed it because he had sold his car. The '57 had been sitting in a barn since 1970 and had only one brake working, left front, so there was no way it could be driven very far. It was scary enough just getting it off the parking lot and onto the trailer that I had just bought. We hit the road late Saturday evening, no problem.

Now, a bit of the history of the car. A gentleman from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, bought and drove it until he got ill and parked it in a barn in 1970. It still had '70 plates and inspection sticker on it. All sorts of paperwork came with it, even a letter from the dealer congratulating him on his purchase. After the owner passed away, a Corvette dealer tried to buy the car to no avail. He forgot all about it after his unsuccessful try. Then one day in 1992 he got a phone call from the widow wanting to know if he would be interested in purchasing the car. He went to investigate and she said that if he wanted to purchase the Roadmaster he would have to take all four vehicles: a 1970 Ford pick-up with 1900 original miles, a Corvair of some sort, a Gremlin and the '57 Roadmaster convertible. He agreed to take all four. He hauled the '57 home, not wanting to try to start it in front of the owner, and then tried to start it with the help of his wife. He put in a new battery, poured gas into the carb, his wife hit the starter and it fired immediately. The lifters didn't even rattle after 22 years. He then had the radiator and carb rebuilt, added a new set of *black-wall tires* and replaced the carpet. "Black-wall tires?" I asked. He could not explain that.

Now that I had the car at home, I start to do some

searching. Several people had tried to buy the car from me at Hershey. I really didn't want to sell it, but finally decided that if I could find an equally good '56 Roadmaster Convertible I would sell. One fellow from New York was very insistent. He sent me papers on every '56 he could, trying to entice me to sell or trade. At this time I also had a '56 Roadmaster 4 door hardtop with only 26,000 original miles, totally original, not a restored car. I fixed the brakes on the '57, drove it a bit, then drove the '56. That's when I decided there was no way that I would make the trade back to a '56. The king pin suspension versus the ball joint suspension were no match. The '57 was mine to stay and it only had 52,000 miles.

We drove the car to local events and around town a bit, but the leather was beginning to show its age. The car had been repainted a long time ago, though I never could figure out why. We also drove it to one of the regional shows up north and entered it in a peer judged event to no avail. But no big deal. I liked it the way it was.

In 2004, I decided it was time to do something to make it look better. Jack Waller and Don Albers said they would reupholster the interior and leather and matching vinyl was ordered. A continental kit and dual Trailmaster mirror/spotlights came from another '57 Roadmaster. The paint work was done by Jim Hoops. In removing the exterior paint, he found no plastic or indication of why the car was repainted earlier. I detailed under the hood and under the car, bought new, correct, wide white-walls and had the front and rear bumpers re-chromed. All the stainless trim as well as all the interior chrome is original, just polished. The motor and transmission still have all the original seals, etc. None have been changed and it leaks very little, no more than a normal car.

We decided to drive the car to Batavia, New York, for the 2005 National BCA show. It made the trip without a glitch of any kind. It even got over 18 miles per gallon when running about 70 to 75 miles per hour. Then it was driven to the Chicago Regional show and, again, no problems. All in all, we drove it almost 3,000 miles last year.

Of all the cars that I own, I consider this '57 to be one of my "Permanent Keepers."

MEMORIES OF HANK DEGLMAN

In the June issue of the *Gateway Gazette* I plan to publish a tribute to Hank Deglman. A week or so ago I received a nice email from Bruce Kunz with a paragraph about Hank. From that, it was clear to me that I couldn't begin to write for everyone.

So I'm asking you, the chapter members, to send me your memories of Hank. Write a sentence or two or tell a funny story. You can give me your input in writing at the May 4th meeting or send it by email or snail mail. My addresses are on the back page of this newsletter.

Since 1955 Women of Achievement

The 2006 Women of Achievement nominating committee has selected Delia Greer as one of this year's honorees. She is being honored in the category of "humanitarian."

This annual award recognizes 10 outstanding women, each of whom has made a significant difference to the St. Louis region through exceptional volunteer service and superior leadership. This award is a regional one, representing a diverse group of women from the entire metropolitan area. St. Louis Women of Achievement is the oldest, on-going program in the area, whose sole mission is to honor and recognize women volunteers, who demonstrate strong commitment and dedication to improving the quality of life in our community.

The 2006 Women of Achievement Awards Luncheon is Monday, May 15th, at The Ritz Carlton, in Clayton. The luncheon is from 11:45 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Tickets are \$50 per person with seating available at tables of ten. Contact your editor, John Waltz, if you want to join some other chapter members at this luncheon.

Thursday, May 4th
Gateway BCA Monthly Meeting
at

Chuck-A-Burger
9025 St. Charles Rock Road

THE MEETING BEGINS AT 7:30 PM

Come early and eat with your Buick friends.

